

Course Syllabus and Assignments
Film 327: Documentary Production
Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts, Rice University

Location: Media Center Auditorium
Time: Thursday 2:30-5:30 & 6:30-9:30

Instructor: Tish Stringer
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A video production course using documentary techniques to encounter people and events in our world and make stories about them. The class meets in two sessions on Thursdays. The first session is focused on training and reviewing works in progress; the second session is spent viewing related materials, this session will sometimes include a special presentation by a visiting filmmaker.

All necessary production & post-production equipment & supplies will be provided and supported including camcorders and video editing systems. If would prefer to use your own equipment, no technical support is offered. An equipment use fee of \$60.00 is charged to each student enrolled in the course and must be paid by September 6th. This fee also entitles students' free admission to special events at the Media Center, which you are strongly encouraged to attend. Check www.arts.rice.edu for event listings.

Students work in camera/production teams of two and complete four documentary projects during the semester. The general subjects of the first two films are: process and event. The third is a document of a visitor to our class (an event/portrait exercise). The final and central project is a portrait film of an individual you currently do not know. The portrait project should begin immediately and continue until the end of semester. Film projects can be no longer than ten minutes in length. Students are also asked to keep a journal of their responses to films we watch in class (you are welcome to also comment on films you watch during the semester outside of class).

Attendance/Participation	10% of grade
Writing assignments	10%
Process videos	10%
Event project	20%
Visitor portrait	20%
Portrait project	30%

Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the instructor during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities will need to also contact Disability Support Services in the Ley Student Center.

This is not a complete list of weekly assignments. Each week basically has the same assignment:

- work on your films
- upload video to be reviewed
- always come to class with your gear, prepared to film
- write responses to the films we watch in class in your film journal

We will use the owlspace website for the class to keep track of schedule and assignments. <https://owlspace-ccm.rice.edu/portal/site/ARTS-FILM-327-001-F12>

This class has a youtube page that you will upload your assignments to for review in class <http://www.youtube.com/user/ricefilm327>

Distribution outlets

There are some outlets for your films you need to be aware of

1. Rice VADA end of year student show – by department choice
2. Student show package to rice webcast – not sure if this is ongoing
3. Rice Television – by special agreement with you
4. Comcast Houston's Voice – by special agreement with you

Important Dates to Remember

August 23rd

Introduction to course requirements & the documentary tradition at Rice University.

Screening of several Rice Student documentary videos.

Assignment: Find a partner and locate a subject for the first project. Log into the course owlspace site and post in the forums under "I can use owlspace!"

No evening session

August 30th

Equipment Use & lab fee due. Make Checks Payable to Rice University, cash (exact change is also acceptable) give them to Tish, and get receipt.

Equipment check out (if lab fee is paid) and overview

Assignment: Film a one minute, in-camera edit of a process. Do not upload to youtube, bring to class in camera.

Evening session: screening

September 6th

Last day to turn in lab fees. Review Process films. Camera and audio exercises in class.

Assignment: Film a new extended process for edit. Bring to class in camera.

Evening session: Fall Art Kick Off Slide Jam 6:30 PM Sculpture Courtyard Sewall Hall

September 13th

Introduction to Final Cut Pro editing system. Students must demonstrate proficiency with this system on an individual basis before gaining access to the facility. Review Process footage.

Assignment: Edit process film. Upload to youtube.

Evening Session: Guest Filmmaker Alex Luster showing his film "Stick 'Em Up!"

September 20th - process films due

Assignment: shoot event film; upload selects to watch in class to youtube.
Evening Session, screening

September 27th

Review event film materials

Assignment: edit event film, upload to youtube

Evening Session – Guest Filmmaker Carlos Calbillo showing his film “The Case of Joe Campos Torres”

October 4th – Event film due, turn in film journals.

Discuss the portrait

Evening Session – Peter Lucas, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

October 11th - MID-TERM BREAK (AKA Centennial Days)

Raid the Archive: The Menil Years at Rice

Exhibition Reception: October 12, 6-8:00 pm

Companion Film Series, October 13, 7:00 pm

Exhibition Panel: October 14, 1-2:30 p.m. (Rice Media Center panel); 3:30-5:00 p.m. (Rice Museum panel).

Assignment from this stage on: work on portrait film

October 18th – Portrait subject due

Evening Session – Laura Harrison showing her film “Underground adventures with the Ant Farm”

October 25th

Evening session: Filmmakers Pat Waugh and Scott Prescott showing “Speed Streets”

November 1st

Evening session: Kristian Salinis, Director QFEST Houston.

November 8th - Complete assembly edit of portrait project.

(Tentative afternoon master class with Lordes Portillo)

Evening session: Arts and Humanities Lecture Or Houston Cinema Arts Festival

November 15th - Complete rough-cut of portrait project

Evening session: Hysterical

November 22nd - THANKSGIVING RECESS HOLIDAY

November 29th - Final class – screening of completed portraits (YES THIS IS THE FINAL DUE DATE)

Turn in film journals

Evening session: filmmaker Joe Berlinger showing CRUDE: The Real Price of Oil 7:00 pm